Vincent Morse

Mrs. Rutan

Creative Writing

6 December 2013

**Graves of the Holey**

Thud. Scoop. Dump.

Breathe. Drink. Repeat.

I’ve been in this droning translucent daze for years—staring at the soil. Sometimes, on the hotter days, I swear it stares back. Why do you taunt me? You’re so rich and full of life; I’m full of repetition, nothing else. I dig, and dig, and dig, with no resolution. Maybe I am searching for something, or coping with a useless mind. Not even Freud would have the answer. Whatever it is, I’m trapped in routine. My mind cannot escape this hole I’ve dug myself into.

The elderly ladies at the barber shop chirp of mental disorders they’ve read about and think I exhibit; some teens like to joke that the aliens left a chip in me the last time I was abducted—I don’t recall; the town’s men say I’m “working it out.” Whatever that means—life perhaps. I just know I dig.

It’s not like I showed weird behaviors as a kid. I wasn’t abused, no drugs, no traumatic events, how did this happen to me? I woke up and decided to dig. There is no objective, just vague guidelines.

My backyard is spotted with holes like the craters of Mars. When I burrow fifteen feet into the Earth’s fragile crust, I stop digging down and begin digging sideways. I’ll hack and stab this damn soil from 8 o’clock in the morning until sundown—no job, no school, no friends, just me, myself, and dirt. It’s a cruel life, but it’s my life.

My toned figure from the weight of the Earth stands 5 foot 11 inches and is topped with abnormally large ears. I wear a defiant farmer’s tan at all times and my hands are callused from the harsh wood of my spade. My name is Tyler Bailey, but mostly everyone calls me Shovel. I guess I can’t blame them since I have a shovel in my hand twelve hours of the day. It’s a shame that my legacy is not of my very successful professional baseball career. In fact, it’s a shame that I’m not even recognized as the Warden’s kid. Leave it to a small town to find judgment and labels.

“Aye Shove, there’s a storm comin’ from the south,” my younger brother peered down at me with a glazed look that masks his face whenever he’s confused. He’s never understood; I’ve never understood.

“I know,” was uttered robotically. I could feel it in the air. I have a sense for those sorts of things. As I penetrated the earth once more with my trusted shovel, I asked, “What are you doing here anyways? The parents are probably wondering where you are.” He always found himself at my house on the days him and father disagreed. He continued to glare, so I returned a blank stare.

“Well I—” He paused with emptiness in his face but a tear in his eye.

“Yes TJ?”

As if in slow mode, he fell. I wanted to reach out but I froze. Like the dances of a leaf on its last breathe, he seemed to detach; he swayed back and forth until he drifted away into the gravitational pull grasping him from within the blackness of a hole. He landed. Hard. Like the blow of a fine sharpened shovel scraping a hardened stone, my brother’s head shimmied down the entirety of the hole. He landed like a corpse, limp with no natural reaction to put his hands down.

I couldn’t speak, I couldn’t move. I stood there in utter disbelief. My brother’s narcolepsy had returned; he hadn’t had an episode in over a year. The doctor said that the fainting disorder had simmered! He must have argued with dad about his attitude again and now he lay before me in this grave that I dug.

“TJ?” Nothing

“TJ?” Nothing once more.

I managed to catch my breath and run over to him. I rolled him over and looked for some kind of sign—something to tell me that he was okay. I found no such evidence. His arm was twisted behind his back and in an awkward jutted position; his inhales and exhales were long and exasperated; the top left of his forehead commenced the rapid flow of Blood River, and his eyes—*oh his eyes*. They were gone, physically intact but mentally engulfed into another world.

Then he whispered most incoherently, “Y-oou are-er—Na-Na- ooo-ha, k-keep digging” And with that, my brother slipped into the dark and unknown ending that we call death—at the age of sixteen from blunt force trauma.

All of our mundane interaction has come to an end. All I had left were memories. The time I taught him to pitch; when he had his first crush and asked for the advice; he even had to ask for help the first time he drove alone because he got himself so lost; all of his existence was now reduced to remembrance.

The day had arrived and the epoch of a funeral was eminent. The black and gloomy atmosphere seemed to match the feeling of Earth. Everybody wept—my family the hardest. Tears ran down my face and in that moment the wind shifted. I could feel it now. In this moment I realized why I dug. The gust coming was no normal storm, and my brother’s death was no normal departure.

He had said something to me; “You are Noah, keep digging.” But could it be? No it couldn’t. Could this storm and its hellish winds be sent from Death? Could I be the savior chosen by God? No it’s not possible, but what else could my brother’s last words mean?

Over the next few days, the thought continued to protrude into my mind and I persistently fought back. I won’t allow this to be true, *but what if it is?* As the battle progressed in my mind, the storm hammered its full force into the moaning structure of my home. It’s as if—it’s as if this storm is not of this world.

I must prepare for the worst; the storm will cast its fury upon us tonight. With every shift of the wind, I became more and more sure of myself. I needed to save my family but how could I convince them of such a tale? It’s simple, I won’t. I’ll just invite them to dinner and when the time comes, we’ll take refuge in the holes. As the plan began to unfold in my mind, I could see no other way. It must work.

I made the calls and extended the invitations for everyone to meet at 6:00 P.M., now all I could do is wait. The clock chimed and yet no one was here. I waited a little longer, and then even longer. The clock chimed again. It was 7 P.M. and no one had showed. Not a single person and it was beginning. The Storm from Hell was upon us.

The winds shrieked and tore at the walls. It was time. I, and I alone, stumbled my way out to the holes. It blew at such an extreme rate that I walked sideways with my eyes squinted. I too—like TJ—found myself falling into a fifteen foot abyss.

I hit the ground and a shot of pain punctured my head and proceeded to play the xylophone down my back. Before I checked out, I remembered seeing the swaying of the tree above. Its leaves danced to the rhythm of Mother Earth’s wrath and the grey sky was falling—fading. It was beautiful.

In my unconscious state, the town around me combatted the winds. Trees blew over, crushing homes; debris swirled as if dancing in the air; the screams of fearful mothers matched the echoes of the tormenting and destructive atmosphere. We were left ruins—betrayed by our own town elements. The very pieces that made our town unique, like lawn decorations and billboards, had worked against each other and swept through this town on a rampage.

When I awoke some eternal time later, the tree I found so beautiful was now blanketing the hole in which I found refuge. Its braches stabbed at the soil around me and one lay on top of my arm. I was pinned and my wrist was crushed. I was trapped. They very hole I dug—not only 48 hours ago—now acted as my tomb. I exhumed my own burial sight.

If this was God’s bidding, he works in cruel and unusual ways, for he has an ironic and morbid humor. I stayed in the hole for three days. I had no water and no food. The pain was excruciating, and eventually the tides of hunger overcome the shattered salt dome in my wrist. When all hope was lost, my wishes were granted. Death and I became acquainted on March 30th, 2013 at 8:17 P.M.

*“…Local man believed to have Schizophrenia and several Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder traits found dead after fatal storm…”*

March 31st, 2013

Town News